

agencies. Department of Education has also set up Kendriya Vidyalayas and Novodaya Vidyalayas which are open to all, irrespective of their caste, creed, sex or region. Colleges are established by State Governments universities or private trusts keeping in view the requirement of education in the given region and availability of resources. Central Government or UGC do not set up any colleges on their own.

[Translation]

Land Submerged Due to Seepage

2979. SHRI NIHAL CHAND CHAUHAN : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether thousands of acres of land submerged due to seepage in the Hanumangarh of Rajasthan;

(b) whether there is any proposal to give financial assistance by the Central Government to the State Government to deal with the problem of seepage; and

(c) if so, the quantum thereof and details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) As reported by Govt. of Rajasthan about 6000 ha. of area under Command of Bhakra Canal System and Indira Gandhi Nahar Stage-I in Hanumangarh district are affected due to seepage.

(b) No Sir, Central Assistance is provided to States in the form of Block Loan and Block Grants and not tied to any specific project, programme or region.

(c) Does not arise.

[English]

Capacity of Periyar Dam

2980. SHRI A.G.S. RAM BABU : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether any proposal is lying with the Union Government in regard to increase in the capacity of Periyar Dam. Tamil Nadu from 136 feet to 152 feet;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken/ being taken by the Government in this regard; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) to (c). Mulla Periyar Dam was constructed in 1897 with Full Reservoir Level at Elevation at 152 ft. The safety of the dam was reviewed in 1979 and it was decided to fill reservoir upto elevation 136 ft. only till strengthening works of the dam were completed by the Government of Tamil Nadu. The strengthening works have since been completed by the Government of Tamil Nadu. However, the Government of Kerala has not agreed to fill the reservoir beyond elevation 136 ft. This Ministry has taken up the matter with the Government of Kerala who have informed that

an Adhoc Committee of the State Legislators had examined the issues and has recommended constitution of a technical committee of experts to study the safety of the dam.

Congestion on NH-35 in West Bengal

2981. SHRI CHITTA BASU : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that wide spread traffic congestion between Chandpara and Bongaon in North 24 Parganas of West Bengal on the NH-35, is causing severe inconveniences for the people of Bongaon town and other neighbouring places;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Indo-Bangladesh trade is being adversely affected by these frequent congestions;

(c) whether Government of West Bengal have since submitted any package of proposals to meet the situation;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps the Government propose to take to ease the congestion?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) to (e). On NH-35, near Bongaon, trucks awaiting clearance at Bangla Desh border checkpost, get lined up by the roadside. In order to streamline traffic flow near checkpost, work of construction of another 2 lane road parallel to the existing NH between Hakar bridge and Bangladesh border and widening single lane reaches near border to 5.5 m. width, has been sanctioned and the same is at tendering stage. Besides, the construction of truck parking layby near the checkpost is also proposed.

[Translation]

Extension of N.H.

2982. JUSTICE GUMAN MAL LODHA : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to extend the length of National Highways in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a National Highway Authority of India was set up for extension and development of the National Highways in the country; and

(d) if so, the amount of annual average expenditure incurred on the said authority during the previous years?

THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) and (b). There is no such proposal at present.

(c) The National Highways Authority of India was set up as a Central agency for taken up the development and maintenance of National Highways.